

JOB DESCRIPTION

Court Appointed Special Advocated of McLean County

Purpose:

The Court Appointed Special Advocate serves by court order as an Officer of the McLean County Juvenile Court. The CASA serves on a volunteer basis as an independent advocate for the Child's best interest and monitors the case until a permanent plan is achieved for the child. The CASA is directly responsible to the CASA Supervisor and comes under the rules and guidelines of the Juvenile Court.

Qualifications:

- A. Age 25 or older
- B. Completion of CASA application, police record check and DCFS CANTS check
- C. Participation in pre-service interview
- D. Successful completion of CASA training
- E. Participants cannot be licensed foster parents

Duties and Responsibilities:

- A. Conduct independent investigation of case
 - 1. Read (and review as appropriate) all relevant records
 - a. Court file
 - b. Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) file
 - c. Private agency file
 - 2. Interview all principals in case
 - a. Biological parents
 - b. Child(ren)
 - c. Foster parents or residential facility personnel
 - d. Extended family members, where appropriate
 - e. Others having pertinent information (Teachers, Physicians, etc.)
- B. Maintain all case information in strict confidence
 - 1. Give case-related information only to parties involved
 - 2. Ensure security of confidential material in case notebook
 - 3. Return all case-related materials to CASA office upon withdrawal from case.
- C. Monitor and facilitate progress of case through system
 - 1. Review Client Service Plan
 - a. Report delays or problems to appropriate parties (CASA Supervisor, Private Agency, DCFS, Assistant States Attorney (ASA), Guardian as Litem (GAL), etc.

2. Monitor parent's progress in following service plan
 - a. Maintain independent personal contact with parents
 - b. Consult with service providers (Therapists, etc.)
3. Follow DCFS'/private agencies' efforts to achieve permanence
 - a. Maintain contact with DCFS/Private Agency worker
 - b. Attend Administrative Case Review (ACR) meetings
 - c. Monitor implementation of ACR objectives
 - d. Report deficiencies to appropriate parties (CASA Supervisor, Private Agency, DCFS, ASA, GAL, etc.)
4. Ensure child is adequately cared for and special needs are addressed.
 - a. Maintain contact with child and foster parents or residential facility personnel
 - b. Consult with service providers (Therapists, Special School District, etc.)
 - c. Report deficiencies to appropriate party (CASA Supervisor, Private agency, DCFS, ASA, GAL, etc.)
5. Consult with Guardian ad Litem (GASL) regarding case
 - a. keep GAL apprised of current case developments
 - b. Clarify any legal questions regarding the case
6. Consult with other appropriate persons (ASA, etc.) as needed.

D. Ensure all relevant information is available to the Court

1. Prepare Court report prior to hearing
 - a. Update case status
 - b. Make recommendations regarding case
 - c. Turn in report to CASA office by the assigned date
2. Ensure CASA presence at all Court hearings
 - a. Attend all court hearings
 - b. Have accurate, up-to-date case file
 - c. Meet prior to hearing to discuss case with parties
 - d. Be prepared to testify if called upon

E. Keep CASA Supervisor informed of case activity and progress

1. Maintain regular contact with CASA Supervisor
 - a. Discuss case advocacy issues and concerns via telephone as issues arise
 - b. Meet with CASA Supervisor in person on a monthly basis
 - c. Develop appropriate case strategies
 - d. Keep Supervisor informed of illness or vacations which would temporarily prevent CASA activity
 - e. Notify CASA Supervisor of any change of address, phone numbers or employment

F. Pursue professional development in the areas of child welfare, family issues and related areas by completing 12 hours per year of in-service training.

What CASAs DO NOT do

- A. A CASA should not provide direct service delivery to any parties that could, **a.)** lead to a conflict of interest or liability problems or **b.)** cause a child or family to become dependent on the CASA advocate for services that should be provided by other agencies or organizations.

Examples of inappropriate advocate practices are:

1. Taking a child home or sheltering a child in the home
 2. Giving legal advice or therapeutic counseling
 3. Making placement arrangements for the child
 4. Giving money or expensive gifts to the child or family
- B. A CASA should not transport a child in the course of his/her duties as a CASA volunteer.
- C. A CASA should not be related to any parties involved in the case, or be employed in a position and/or agency that might result in a conflict of interest.